

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PHNOM 06093 100423Z

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ACTION SS-25

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O 100325Z APR 75 ZFF-3
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 239
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S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 6093

EXDIS

CINCPAC FOR ADMIRAL GAYLER

SECSTATE FOR THE SECRETARY

USSAG FOR GENERAL BURNS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AEMR, MOPS, PINS, CB, US
SUBJECT: EAGLE PULL

REF: CINCPAC 092243Z APR 75

1. REFTEL TRANSMITS ADMIRAL GAYLER'S RECOMMENDATION THAT WE INITIATE EAGLE PULL NOT LATER THAN DAYLIGHT 12 APRIL. MY CHIEF MILITARY ADVISER ON THE GROUND IN PHNOM PENH, GENERAL PALMER, IS FULLY IN AGREEMENT WITH THE ADMIRAL'S ASSESSMENT OF THE MILITARY SITUATION. I AGREE WITH BOTH OF THEM THAT THE LONGER WE DELAY THE EVACUATION OPERATION THE MORE DIFFICULT IT WILL BE TO EXECUTE AND THE GREATER WILL BE THE JEOPARDY IN WHICH WE WILL BE PLACING AMERICAN LIVES.

2. IN LINE WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS TO PROVIDE FULL AND PROMPT INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION HERE, THERE FOLLOWS A SUMMARY OF THE MILITARY PICTURE IN AND AROUND PHNOM PENH AS OF THE MORNING OF APRIL 10. I REQUEST IMMEDIATE GUIDANCE AS TO WHETHER WE SHOULD PLAN TO INITIATE EAGLE PULL AT DAYLIGHT 12

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 PHNOM 06093 100423Z

APRIL.

3. BEGINNING ON THE WEST, AT ROUTE 4, AND CONTINUING COUNTER-CLOCKWISE AROUND THE PERIMETER, HERE ARE THE AREAS OF GREATEST THREAT AND PENETRATION:

- A. AT A POINT DUE NORTH OF BEK CHAN THE ENEMY IS TWO KILOMETERS FROM KANTAU AMMUNITION DEPOT, OR WITHIN 60MM MORTAR RANGE.
- B. SOUTHEAST OF TUOL LEAP ALONG THE RAILROAD TRACK TWO BATTALIONS OF THE 81ST BRIGADE VACATED THEIR NARROW SECTOR ON THE FRONT LAST NIGHT AND WITHDREW 3 TO 4 KILOMETERS TO SAMRONG. THE GENERAL FRONT LINE AT THIS POINT WAS 8 KILOMETERS FROM THE AIRPORT. IF THE ENEMY EXPLOITS THIS GAP HE COULD MOVE IN MUCH CLOSER.
- C. NORTHEAST OF TUOL LEAP AND ALMOST DUE NORTH OF POCHENTONG, THERE IS A 1.5 KILOMETER GAPS BETWEEN THE 28TH AND 45TH BRIGADES. IT HAS EXISTED FOR SEVERAL DAYS; NO ONE IN FANK HAS BOTHERED TO TRY TO CLOSE IT. THE ENEMY WITH LITTLE EFFORT COULD BE WITHIN 5 KILOMETERS OF THE AIRPORT IN THIS AREA.
- D. FARTHER TO THE NORTHEAST ON THE 84 EAST-WEST GRID LINE, 2 TERRITORIAL FORCE BATTALIONS JUST IN FROM KOMPONG SEILA RETREATED 800 METERS, CLOSELY FOLLOWED BY THE KC, WHO ARE HERE A FULL 2 KILOMETERS SOUTH OF THE NORTH DIKE AND ONLY 6 KILOMETERS FROM THE EDGE OF THE PHNOM PENH QUARTER OF TUOL KAU.
- E. ON THE PENINSULA BETWEEN THE TONLE SAP AND MEKONG RIVERS THE ENEMY LAST NIGHT ATTACKED BY HEAVY WEAPONS (700 ROUNDS ARE CLAIMED, THOUGH THIS IS PROBABLY EXAGGERATED) A TERRITORIAL BATTALION, INFLECTING 10 KILLED AND 50 WOUNDED. THE FRONT IS NOW 8 KILOMETERS NORTH OF THE 80 GRID LINE, OR OF THE NORTHERN PART OF THE CITY, BUT THERE IS LITTLE THERE TO CONTAIN THE ENEMY WHEN HE DECIDES TO DRIVE SOUTH.
- F. ON THE EAST BANK OF THE MEKONG OPPOSITE THE CITY, TERRITORIAL UNIT POSITIONS WERE LOST ON THE BANK AT THE 77 E-W GRID LINE DIRECTLY EAST OF THE ROYAL PALACE. FROM THAT POINT THE ENEMY HOLDS 2.5 KILOMETERS OF THE BANK EXTENDING TO THE EAST. IN ADDITION, ANOTHER POSITION WAS GIVEN UP LAST NIGHT 1.5 KILOMETERS EAST OF THE RIVER SLIGHTLY TO THE NORTH OF THE BANK AREA IN ENEMY HANDS. BOTH OF THESE ENEMY LOCATIONS ARE WITHIN 4 KILOMETERS OF THE CITY'S WATERFRONT. YESTERDAY 75MM RECOILLESS RIFLE ROUNDS WERE LANDING IN THE WATER JUST SHORT OF THE WATER FRONT. TODAY THEY COULD BE WELL WITHIN THE CITY ITSELF.
- G. ON THE SOUTHEAST IN THE AREAS BETWEEN THE BASSAC AND MEKONG RIVERS AND WEST OF THE BASSAC (THE FANK 2D AND 1ST DIVISION FRONTS),

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 PHNOM 06093 100423Z

FANK HAS IN THE PAST TEN DAYS LOST EVERY INCH OF GROUND WON IN HEAVY FIGHTING BETWEEN JULY AND DECEMBER OF LAST YEAR. THEY HAVE ENTIRELY LOST ANLONG CHEN ISLAND AND HAVE GIVEN UP SUFFICIENT GROUND ON THE WEST BANK OF THE BASSAC TO PLACE THE ENEMY WITHIN 5 KILOMETERS OF PHNOM PENH SUBURB.

H. OUR ORDER OF BATTLE INFORMATION INDICATES A MASSING OF 40 TO 45 KC BATTALIONS (EARLY ESTIMATE- 11 TO 13,000 MEN) NOW IN THE AREA OPPOSITE THE 1ST AND 2D FANK DIVISIONS. THESE ARE THE EASTERN

REGION 1ST AND 2D KC DIVISIONS AND THE KC SPECIAL REGION 11TH AND 12TH BRIGADES. FANK 1ST AND 2D DIVISION FORCES OPPOSING THEM ARE EXTREMELY WEAK, DISPIRITED, POORLY DUG IN, AND POORLY LED. THE EXPECTED ENEMY PUSH IN THIS SECTOR SHOULD BE SWIFT WHEN IT IS LAUNCHED.

4. IN ASSESSING THE HEAVY WEAPONS SIDE OF THE ABOVE THREAT, THE FOLLOWING RANGES MIGHT BE BORNE IN MIND: 105 MM HOWITZER - 11.1KM; 107 MM ROCKET - 7.5 TO 8 KM; 75MM RECOILLES RIFLE - 6.5 KM; 120MM MORTAR- 5.7 KM; 81 OR 82MM MORTAR 3 TO 3.5 KM; 60MM MORTAR- 2 KM.
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